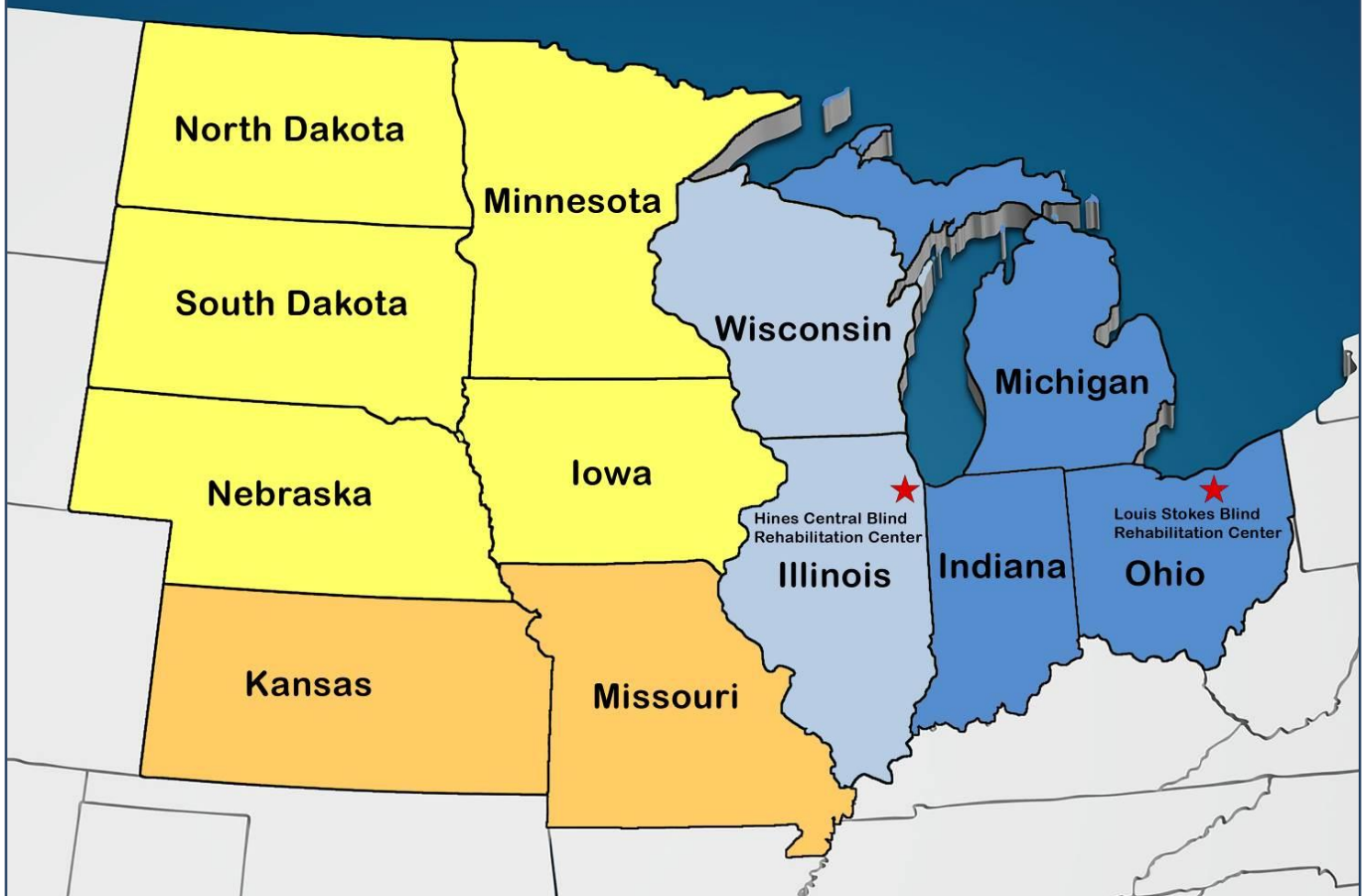




C.B.R.C. TORCH
A publication of the
Central Blind Rehabilitation Center
Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital

Spring/Summer 2016

CENTRAL AREA REGION



"Let it light the pathways of the blind, that their dignity may be restored."

CBRC TORCH NEWSLETTER TEAM

The following Blind Center Staff members are responsible for bringing you the TORCH Newsletter:

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Visual Skills

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Recreation Therapy

Denise Van Koevering
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Our Mission

The mission of the Hines Blind Rehabilitation Center is to provide high quality Blind Rehabilitation services through the provision of a broad range of rehabilitation programs.

Table of Contents

In our efforts to improve the accessibility of the TORCH the Table of Contents below allows e-readers to float the cursor over the list of articles and use the commands “control and click” to quickly link to the article within the publication

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Chief's Message

With 2016 well on its way, we are busy 'gearing up' for the Summer season which brings much anticipated seasonal recreation events and outings for our Vets: golf outings, baseball games and cook-outs in the Blind Center Courtyard.



Speaking of golf outings, we want to acknowledge the significant contributions the UVS Golf Swing club brings to our blind rehabilitation program. Without these community partners we would not be able to offer this activity to our Vets each season. A big shout-out to the UVS Golf Swing Club and thanks for your time, effort and generosity! This year also marks the 70th Anniversary of VA Voluntary Service (VAVS). It is estimated that VAVS is more than 75,000 strong, contributing approximately 9 million hours of service in 2015. The Hines Blind Rehabilitation Center benefits from a number of volunteers who serve regularly. A shout-out to all of the Blind Center Volunteers for their help and assistance: Bill McCloskey, Mike Capuano, Dave Erfort, Jim McQuillen, Richard Gualano, Melisa Fuller, Don Derubis, Lorraine Angelini, Gwen DePinto, Dorene Schutter, Wallace Vinson, Amina Kadi, Kay Sands, Mary Olaughlin, Ellisa Melendez-Jimenez, Loraine, Elaine, and Alexis Angelini. The Staff and

Veterans are deeply grateful for your willingness to serve at the BRC.

Another area celebrating a milestone this year is the VA Polytrauma System of Care (PSC) which has hit the one million mark in screening Veterans for Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). TBI's are often regarded as one of the signature injuries of combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. TBI symptoms such as severe headaches, memory loss, and tinnitus, to name a few, can range from manageable to seriously disabling. VA has 110 Polytrauma Rehabilitation sites across the country. Hines VA is one of 23 Polytrauma Network Sites (comprehensive outpatient rehabilitation) which provides coordinated rehabilitative care to Veterans with life-changing injuries, including TBI, limb loss, and blindness. Referrals from the Polytrauma Network team here at Hines VA, often make our inpatient roster. We are happy to be of service to this area of VA Care.

Finally, let's not forget to remember our fallen Service Members this Memorial Day, for those who have died in service of the United States of America. In honor of Memorial Day this year, the TORCH features a poem submitted by one of our Blind Rehabilitation Center patients, Mr. Bill Kretz. Take a moment to read his works on page 13. Thank you for your Service to our country.

Performance Improvement

Mid-year reports for Performance Improvement show we have met or exceeded all of the goals for the first half of the year. Check out our progress below.



- Access** to Inpatient Care rolled in at 72%. Our Target was to admit 70% of our patients within 120 days of receiving their application. We are on target!

- Virtual Care**, another form of **Access** to care, which includes Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT) and MyHealtheVet, are exceeding our targets. A total of 52% of Veterans admitted this fiscal year were enrolled in MyHealtheVet with a target of 50%. We are on target! Be sure to read the educational piece on MyHealtheVet that follows. Additionally, the CVT modality (or mode of treatment) exceeded the minimum target of 20 appointments, rolling in at 27 program reviews, a VIST Support group facilitated through CVT and a Family Program.

- Patient Satisfaction** continues to exceed national averages rolling in at just over 98% satisfaction. Improvements were identified in two areas; ensuring Veterans knowledge of accessing community resources

and services, and improving confidence in Veteran's ability to do the things that they want to do now. Staff Satisfaction has been progressing, as we have responded to a number of areas that indicated room for improvement: praise, conflict resolution, psychological safety and exhaustion. We continue to modify the program schedule to allow for adequate documentation time. Also, we implemented measures to improve daily communications, are investigating educational opportunities for improved conflict resolution skills, and are fostering ideas for formal praise strategies.

- Infection Control** has remained 'in check' as we have maintained the threshold through the difficult flu season and kept our patients free of contagious diseases often spread through poor infection control practices. We are in good shape!

We continue to explore opportunities to further exceed these goals and strive for excellence in all areas of our program.

What Is My HealtheVet?



MyHealtheVet is an online environment where veterans, family, and clinicians may come together to optimize a Veteran's health.

Veterans are able to access a single source of trusted health information, one stop shopping for a variety of information:

- VA benefits
- a health calendar
- self-enter health insurance information
- medical events
- labs
- medications
- allergies
- immunizations
- Military Health History
- Nine health trackers (e.g., blood pressure, blood sugar, weight, cholesterol, pain level, etc.)

Veterans are able to refill prescriptions on line, to track information in food and activity journals, and access personal and family health histories as part of the

Personal Health Record (PHR). You can also print a summary of your Personal Health Record and share it with your VA and non-VA providers to improve the level of care you are receiving. Any requested health information will be forwarded to your account after an initial delay to provide time for your healthcare provider to review the information and allow personal communication with you as appropriate.

Below is the link to the MyHealtheVet home page. Chances are that you enrolled while you were at the Blind Rehabilitation Center. If you haven't visited since you returned home, dig out your user name and password and click on the link below. You may be surprised as to how helpful this resource is.

Next issue will feature some information on how to refill prescriptions through MyhealtheVet, so stay tuned!

https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/anonymous.portal?_nfpb=true&nfto=false&_pageLabel=registrationHome&WT.ac=splash_register_rightCol_box

Meet the Staff

This issue features some of our clinical staff who play an

Hello
my name is

important role in our patient's overall rehabilitation experience. We are pleased to introduce to you our Staff Social Worker, Staff Psychologist and Staff Optometrist.

Melissa Wilt is our staff Social Worker at the Hines Blind Rehabilitation Center. Melissa graduated from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa with



a BA in Psychology and received her MSW from the University of Illinois at Chicago Jane Addams College of Social Work. Melissa has 15 years of government service at Hines including seven at the BRC. Prior to working in the BRC, Melissa worked eight years at Hines in the Extended Care Center focusing on long term care and hospice.

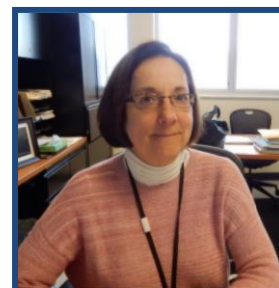
Dr. Jennifer Kiebles is our new staff psychologist, starting in July 2015. Jennifer has been at Hines VA since 2011. She



obtained her doctoral degree from the

Illinois Institute of Technology in clinical psychology in 2007. She completed her clinical internship at Jesse Brown VA Medical Center in Chicago in 2007. Following internship, she joined a medical research team at the Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine, in the department of gastroenterology. Completing her clinical research fellowship in 2009, she remained at Northwestern as an assistant research professor focused on investigating adjustment and coping behaviors with digestive disorders.

Dr. Joan Stelmack has provided clinical low vision services at the Hines Blind Rehabilitation Center for over 32



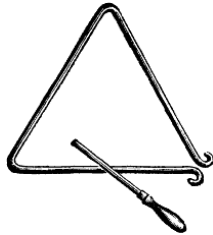
years. She received her OD from Illinois College of Optometry and her MPH from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Currently, Dr. Stelmack serves as Co-Director of the Optometry Residency in Ocular Disease/Low Vision Rehabilitation and Preceptor of a Low Vision Rehabilitation Rotation for students from the Illinois College of Optometry. She is an Associate Professor at Illinois College of Optometry and Clinical Associate Professor at the Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary, University of Illinois School of Medicine.

Special Thanks is extended to long time Blind Center Clinical Dietetic Technician. Kelvin Gilkey, who retired at the end of April. Kelvin served at Hines VA for 33 years. For all the support you gave our Veterans and the staff, Thanks and Congratulations on your retirement!



CHOW CALL

The following recipes are brought to you courtesy of the Hines BRC Cookbook.



If you are in the mood for a Mexican Fiesta, give the following a try.

Chicken Nacho Bake

Gluten Free Easy

Type of Recipe: Oven

5 Ingredients

Approximate Cost for Ingredients: \$15

Approximate Prep Time: 10 minutes

Approximate Cook Time: 30 minutes

List of Ingredients:

4 Boneless skinless chicken breast

1 jar of chunky salsa

1 container of Sour Cream

1 cup of crushed tortilla chips

1 cup of shredded Mexican style cheese

Directions:

Top each chicken breast evenly with salsa, sour cream and tortilla chips.

Bake for 20 mins. Remove from oven and sprinkle with cheese. Bake an additional 10 minutes or until chicken is cooked through.

Chicken Fajitas

Gluten Free, Heart Healthy, Diabetic, Lactose Free, Easy, Freezable.

Type of Recipe: Microwave

Approximate Prep Time: 5 min

Approximate Cook Time: 20 min

List of Ingredients:

1 Frozen bag of sliced peppers and onions

1 package of chicken breast tenderloins

Add the following spices to taste:

Paprika

Oregano

Cayenne pepper

Black pepper

Garlic powder

Onion powder

Salt

Thyme

Directions:

Add everything to microwave safe dish, cover with lid, microwave until chicken is cooked through, approximately 20 minutes.

Recreation at the BRC



During the months of November through April, the Veterans have an opportunity to learn about the craft of **fly tying**. Local groups, **DRIFT** or the **Dupage Rivers Fly Tyers**, meet and volunteer their time one time a month to assist in teaching our Veterans about the craft of fly tying.



They learn about the various materials used, colors that work best for certain fish, and also which type of fly works best to catch certain fish. (See photo above). Typically, the veterans learn how to make a woolly buggie first, which works best to catch most fish. (See Photo below).



Fishing outings scheduled for the summer months will give the Vets an opportunity to try out their work. See photo from last season below. They really work!



While we're on the topic of fishing, allow us to offer some tips for making the sport of fishing more enjoyable for the visually impaired fisherman or fisherwomen. (Yes, there are a few.) Check out the following article on visual adaptive aids for fishing.

Visual Adaptive Aids for Fishing

Brought to you by
Wesley Hodgson, VIST,
Des Moines, IA



One important aspect of fishing, especially adaptive fishing, is or should be preparation; similar to grocery shopping or trying a new route to work. Practice, planning, and intentionality are important. Below are some suggestions for devices and techniques as well as a number of sources for items to make your fishing trips successful and enjoyable.

Some adaptive devices that can come in handy include:

- Optivisor (or other similar hands free magnifier)
- CCTV (utilizing high-contrast)
- Hi power reader

1. Using a CCTV or other devices to pre-rig leaders & lures / flies or bait, has proven very helpful.

2. Using snap swivels- they work great for lures or bait fisherman. Snap swivels also work fine for most fly fishing – except for trout.

Snap swivels can be added to each end of the leader- so that changing the leader out quickly is just a “snap”

3. Knot tying tools (the following link can be very helpful)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DxZUptwiZgg>

4. Hook threaders- (link below) two kinds work well, magnetic – creating

contrast “line the channel” with puff paint or the wire version.

[http://www.cabelas.com/product/Magnetic-Fly-](http://www.cabelas.com/product/Magnetic-Fly-Threader/711393.uts?productVariantId=1603646&srccode=cii_17588969&cpncode=45-160177067-2&WT.tsrc=PPC&WT.mc_id=GoogleProductAds&WT.z_mc_id1=02502627&rid=20)

[Threader/711393.uts?productVariantId=1603646&srccode=cii_17588969&cpncode=45-160177067-](http://www.cabelas.com/product/Magnetic-Fly-Threader/711393.uts?productVariantId=1603646&srccode=cii_17588969&cpncode=45-160177067-2&WT.tsrc=PPC&WT.mc_id=GoogleProductAds&WT.z_mc_id1=02502627&rid=20)

[2&WT.tsrc=PPC&WT.mc_id=GoogleProductAds&WT.z_mc_id1=02502627&rid=20](http://www.cabelas.com/product/Magnetic-Fly-Threader/711393.uts?productVariantId=1603646&srccode=cii_17588969&cpncode=45-160177067-2&WT.tsrc=PPC&WT.mc_id=GoogleProductAds&WT.z_mc_id1=02502627&rid=20)

5. Practice tying the knots with Amnesia® red fishing line is high contrast, larger, and makes practice and use easier. (see link that follows)

<http://www.cabelas.com/product/Sunset-Amnesia-Shooting-Line/710090.uts>

6. Bait Threaders. – For help with minnows or worms, try Googling for good resources in your area for bait threaders or go to one of the outdoor sports retailers, like Bass Pro or Cabelas and ask about them.

7. Rig Storage-staying organized is key. See link below for a good option for rig storage for anyone, but, especially visually impaired fisher people.

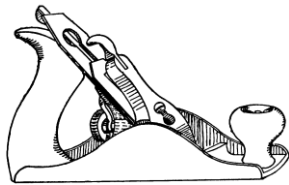
<http://www.orvis.com/p/dropper-rig-fly-box/76kh>

Some adaptive techniques include the following:

- Use bright colored large bobbers.
- Place a finger on the fishing line to feel for when a fish starts to tug on the line. Tenkara® fly rods are small Japanese fly rods that allow you to feel if there is a fish on the other end.
- Tie some hooks on a leader before you head out then store the leaders on a styrofoam cup. You should have a snap swivel on the fishing line to the rod and could switch out the leaders as needed. Enjoy!

Shop Talk With Sean

Ready to blow off
the winter blues



and get back into some of those hobbies you have put on hold while hibernating for the winter? Might one of those hobbies be woodworking? Whatever your level of woodworking experience, a birdhouse is a great project. This is a project that can be made easily, inexpensively, and enjoyed for a long time. For those who are more advanced or more adventurous, there is plenty of room for creativity as well as many unique design plans that can be found on the internet.

A basic birdhouse can be made out of a single 8 foot board purchased at your local hardware store, along with a dowel rod, some decking screws and wood glue. It will only require a few power tools, some of which may be supplemented by hand tools, depending on what you have. What will you need to get started? A chop saw to cut your pieces to length, a measuring device, and a power drill. This is a great project to implement some of the adaptive measuring devices you may have learned to use while at the Blind Rehabilitation Center. If this is your first birdhouse, start with a simple design. For more advanced woodworkers, challenge yourself to create something unique. The most important thing is that you continue to do the things you enjoy!

Eye Conditions

This issue's Eye
Conditions
column features
Eccentric
Viewing.



When individuals have a central loss of their vision, they may have impaired central vision or an actual blind spot. As a result, this affects their best area of vision for fine detail and color. One way of helping individuals with central vision loss is with eccentric viewing (EV) training. EV is a technique in which the individual looks slightly away from the target in order to see it better using their peripheral vision. Ideally, the person wants to use their eyes to move to the area in their peripheral vision that is their next best area instead of turning their head to locate that same position.

Some people with central vision loss may complain that they find a good spot and then it disappears on them. Often the reason for this disappearance is because the person is moving their eyes away from that next best area of vision without even realizing it. One of the keys with EV training is to locate their EV spot consistently and to hold that EV spot consistently. In addition, with training, the person can learn to shift their eyes so that they can move their EV spot horizontally, vertically, diagonally without having to turn their head.

The most important point to remember with EV is that it does not repair the person's vision loss. It just helps them use their remaining vision better. When using the EV spot, the person then can use this next best area of vision in combination with magnification, increased contrast, and improved lighting to enhance their vision.

Reliable Resources

Ohhh
the places you
can go and
have fun!



Summer
is coming and
there is so much to do. Out with the
old and in with the new **You**.

If vision loss is keeping you from traveling and going to new places, it may be time to do some research. There are so many accommodations available to people with visual impairments than ever before. If you are not sure, please call ahead and make some inquiries.

If you plan on traveling to any Federal Recreational areas and National Parks, such as, Monuments, Historic Sites, Recreation Areas, or Wild Life Refuges, remember you and your family are allowed free entrance with proof of legal impairment. The Art Institute in Illinois will assist you by offering a historian to walk with you

and your group to explain the different paintings. Many museums offer audio description. For attending special events, like a baseball games or theater, call ahead to ask if better seating is available. Good advice is always to call ahead and plan.

Another fun adventure might be to try an educational tour. Road Scholar travel company offers educational tours in all states and over 150 countries. It is for adults only and offers verbal presentation to make it a more enjoyable experience for you!

How about researching your local gardens and botanical gardens to enjoy nature? Many are offering sensory trails with raised beds for the purpose of touch and smell. Some gardens are designed with contrasting edges (dark path with light surrounding foliage) to better view the path. Some modern designs include a wider path space for wheelchair accessibility.

No matter the event, ask and find out if accessible options are available, such as, audio description, better viewing, and/or pathways. If you don't ask, you won't know.

RECREATION PASSPORT PROGRAM

888 GO-PARKS (467-2757)

www.nps.gov/fees_passes.htm3

ROAD SCHOLAR

1-800-454-5768

www.roadscholar.org

Tales from Andy

Brought to you by
our virtual guide
Dog, "Andy."

Hope you find the
following

**"Jokes and
Quotes"** humorous
and entertaining.
Enjoy!



"JOKES"

Sergeant's philosophy

The Company Commander and the
First Sergeant were in the field. As
they hit the sack for the night, the First
Sergeant said, "Sir, look up into the
sky and tell me what you see?"

The CO said, "I see millions of stars."

1st Sgt.: "And what does that tell you,
sir?"

CO: "Astronomically, it tells me that
there are millions of galaxies and
potentially billions of planets.

Theologically, it tells me that God is
great and that we are small and
insignificant. Meteorologically, it tells
me that we will have a beautiful day
tomorrow. What does it tell you, Top?"

1st Sgt.: "Well sir, it tells me that
somebody stole our tent."



Very Important Colonel

Having just moved into his new office,
a pompous, new colonel was sitting at
his desk when a PFC knocked on the
door. Conscious of his new position,
the colonel quickly picked up the

phone, told the PFC to enter, then
said into the phone, "Yes, General, I'll
be seeing him this afternoon and I'll
pass along your message. In the
meantime, thank you for your good
wishes, sir."

Feeling as though he had sufficiently
impressed the young enlisted man, he
asked, "What do you want?"

"Nothing important, sir," the PFC
replied, "I'm just here to hook up your
telephone."

The preceding jokes were found at
the below link.

<http://www.swapmeetdave.com/Humor/MilJoke.htm>



"QUOTES"

"The more I want to get something
done, the less I call it work."

—Richard Bach

"If you genuinely want something,
don't wait for it — teach yourself to be
impatient."

—Gurbaksh Chahal

Veterans Such as These

By Bill Kretz

The following
poem was

inspired by the novel, "Such Men as These" by David Sears, the story of the Navy Pilots who flew the deadly skies over Korea, written to honor fallen comrades from WWI and Korea. Since then, Women have been added to the fighting forces. In honor of these women, the poem was entitled **"Veterans Such as These."**

The sun is shining brightly,
And our flag waves in the breeze.
We all enjoy our freedoms,
Due to Veterans such as these.

They answered their Country's call,
And never did question why.
They came home whole or wounded,
While some others had to die.

They came from all walks of life,
And traveled the Seven Seas.
We all share in the freedoms,
Earned by Veterans such as these.

To our warriors they did go,
In the Twinkling of an eye.
To preserve all of our rights,
Be it on land, sea or sky.

In the heat of the summer,
Or in winter's icy freeze;
We are all safe and secure,
Due to Veterans such as these.



"In God We Trust" our motto,
They believed it from day one;
And stood shoulder to shoulder,
Until Victory was won.

So each day we ask our God,
With bowed heads and knees,
To bless us in the future
With more Veterans such as These.

Memorial Day

Memorial Day is America's kick-off to summer, but it's also a time to remember those who sacrificed their futures so that we could enjoy our present. This point separates its purpose from Veterans Day, which honors all Veterans, not just those who died fighting in our nation's wars.

"The price of freedom is eternal vigilance."

– President Thomas Jefferson

"Our nation owes a debt to its fallen heroes that we can never fully repay, but we can honor their sacrifice."

– President Barack Obama

Know your VIST (Visual Impairment Services Team Coordinators)

The Visual Impairment Services Team Coordinators, better known as (VIST) are your case managers for Blind Rehabilitation care and services and your first contact when you need to enroll or apply for a program. Whether it be your first admission to the Blind Center, a special program to meet unique needs, or a refresher program, these representatives are key. The following is a current updated list for the Central area Region who refer Veterans to the Hines Central Blind Rehabilitation Center.

<u>VIST Coordinator</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>PHONE</u>
Gregory Manuel	Lexington, KY	(859) 281-3916
Julie Kennedy (Acting)	Louisville, KY	(502) 287-4000 x5898
Brian Joos	Cincinnati, OH	(513) 475-6397
VACANT	Dayton, OH	(937) 268-6511 X3514
Julie Wenger	Chillicothe, OH	(740) 773-1141 X6135
Matthew Page	Columbus OPC	(614) 257-5325
Beth Levine	Youngstown OPC	(330) 740-9200 X1580
Marianne Ryan	Cleveland, OH	(216) 791-3800 X4240
Jennifer Troyer	Detroit, MI	(313) 576-4888
Bill Bernhard	Battle Creek, MI	(269) 223-6607
Richard Alden	Ann Arbor, MI	(734) 845-3064
Deanna Austin	Indianapolis, IN	(317) 988-2576
Jeff Stroud	Danville, IL	(217) 554-5406
Jeff Stroud	Peoria, IL	(309) 497-0790
NovaLea Welch	FT Wayne, IN	(260) 426-5431 x72650
Leland Lewis	Saginaw, MI	(989) 497-2500 X11852
Eric Strong	North Chicago, IL	(224) 610-5429
Pat Zeinstra	Hines, IL	(708) 202-2351
Melinda Dunlap	Jesse Brown (Chicago, IL)	(312) 569-7531
Leon Haith	Milwaukee, WI	(414) 384-2000 X41832
Kurt Brunner	Madison, WI	(608) 256-1901
Patricia Staller	Iron Mountain, MI	(906) 774-3300 X34515
Gina Chmelka	Tomah, WI	608-372-3971 x66440

Kevin Jacques	ST. Louis, MO	(314) 652-4100 X54121
Paul Clary-Archuleta	Kansas City, MO	(816) 861-4700 x56924
Erin Hullinger	Poplar Bluff, MO	573-686-4151X52151
Dawn M. Clouse	Leavenworth, KS	(913) 682-2000 x52657
Betty Howerton	Marion, IL	(618) 997-5311 X54815
Bob Hamilton	Wichita, KS	(316) 651-3682
Lauren Swift	Columbia, MO	(573) 814-6458
Anna Perry	Sioux Falls, MI	(605) 336-3230 X7860
Jennifer Points	Minneapolis, MN	(612) 467-1814
Lois Thesing	St Cloud, MN	(320) 255-6480 X6192
Wesley Hodgson	Des Moines, IA	(515) 699-4762
Jean Butler	Omaha, NE	(402) 995-3188
Keith Queen	Iowa City, IA	(319) 338-0581 x6889
Jody Schommer	Fargo, ND	(701) 232-3241 X3056
Galen Britain	Black Hills, SD	(605) 745-2000 X92558

Contact Us:

For comments, questions, address updates, or readers who wish to be added to the e-mail distribution of this publication, please contact us at the address, phone, or e-mail below:

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http://www.hines.va.gov/services/blind_rehab.asp

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C.B.R.C. TORCH



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**FREE MATTER FOR THE BLIND
& PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED
POSTAL MANUAL PART 135**